



# MMSA NEWS

November 2014

## *Notes from the Principals*

Dear Parents,

As we say often at the start of a new school year, the year is off to a good start when things are going well for your child. We hope that the report card that came home with this newsletter will generate some good conversation between you and your child about how the school year is going so far.

We hope that the report card indicates good academic progress, positive relationships with teachers, good effort and good work habits. From several years of reviewing MMS report cards, I know that most of them reflect this sort of progress. If your child's report card matches this description, your conversation with your child will be a pleasure. You can focus on ways to maintain motivation and perhaps consider a different activity or area of the school for your child to explore.

If the report card indicates that there are some areas that need improvement, this is a good time to review your child's learning habits. The effort mark is a direct reflection of work completion. Students do not receive a mark of "Excellent" or "Good" in effort if they have missed more than one assignment in that class. Routinely, well over 80% of our students' effort marks are "Excellent" or "Good."

At school, teachers will review their students' progress thus far. Teaching teams and individual teachers will assign X-Block time for extra help and studying for students who need more direction in their schoolwork. Sometimes study habits that were adequate in earlier grades are no longer enough as assignments become more frequent or more complex. Teachers will want to work with your child to teach approaches and habits that will help them to become more successful.



At our opening assembly in September, I spoke to the student body and explained that school at times will take "hard work". In my conversation with students I explained that we as teachers were not doing our job if we didn't challenge them to work hard and grapple with concepts in new ways. I also explained to the students that middle school is a time when they will be encouraged to persevere through challenging tasks. In my message, I explained the value of perseverance, grit and tenacity and how these characteristics that we strive to develop in each of them now, will benefit them as they move on to high school, college and beyond. Essentially, the skill set that they develop in middle school, prepares them to successfully navigate future rigorous experiences.

Our children naturally live in the moment. It is incumbent upon us as parents and teachers, to help them see the connections between what they are doing now and how these experiences and new learning opportunities prepare them to embrace and successfully navigate future challenges. As adults, we all have encountered moments when we have had to persevere. We are capable of maneuvering these moments as the result of many years of experience building the capacity to persevere in challenging situations. I encourage you as parents to help your child develop the perseverance, grit and determination to "hang in there" when they are challenged.

## *Notes from the Principals Continued ...*

Students are also more likely to persevere when they can draw on specific strategies and tactics to deal with challenges and setbacks. They need actionable skills for taking responsibility and initiative, and for being productive under conditions of uncertainty.

Here are a few practical tips:

Define tasks

Plan out longer assignments

Monitor progress and offer encouragement and feedback

Help them to talk through and plan how to address specific obstacles

Encourage a “growth mindset” – In other words, “My ability and competence grow with my effort.”

Foster stick-to-itiveness

At Open House I encouraged parents to “praise the process” and not the product. Essentially recognize the effort and hard work that your child puts into completing the assignment. What your child learns from the process is equally as important as the content knowledge gained from the learning task. As parents, we all strive to develop self-sufficient and successful individuals. Essential ingredients for this endeavor: grit, perseverance, and tenacity.

And now it's second marking period – a clean slate, a new beginning, new chances to explore and to be actively engaged in all that MMS has to offer.

Sincerely,

Candace Morell  
Principal

Larry Barlow  
Assistant Principal



## ***Yankee Candle Fundraiser is back!!!***

The Yankee candle fundraiser order forms went home Friday the 24th.  
Orders are due back in no later that Nov.12.  
Delivery will be Dec.8 .

You can also order online.

**MMSA will be giving away a \$25.00 Visa/  
master card to the highest seller!!!**

Please contact Jean Johnson with any questions:  
[jeanmmsa@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jeanmmsa@sbcglobal.net)



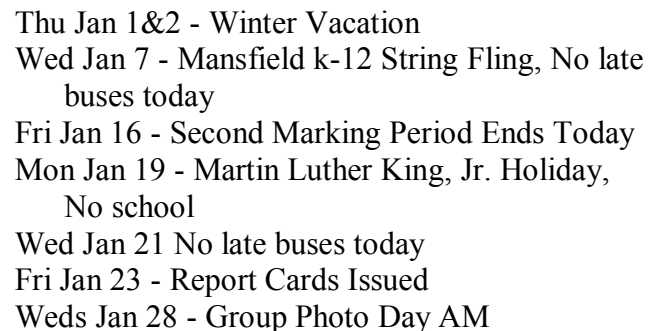
## ***MMSA Annual Holiday Bake Sale! ~ December 17th ~***

MMSA will hold it's annual Holiday Bake Sale in the MMS cafeteria during the Winter Choral & Orchestra concerts.

We will need help with donations of baked goods and help setting up and running sale.

A separate notice will go out closer to the date.







## ***MMSA Box Tops Contest!***



We will be running a Box Top contest to see which homeroom can collect the most. An award/prize will be given to the winning homeroom. Clip and save your Box Tops, but don't send them in until 11/15 – we'll send out a reminder for when the contest begins.

The school submits Box Tops and receives money back which is used to support various school activities, programs and teacher/staff grants.

**Help the school and Help the kids!!**  
***Thanks for supporting the MMSA!!***

## ***Shopping Points Program***

Don't forget to register MMS as your designated school for your Big Y, Stop & Shop and Target cards!!

You can do this at the store or online.

This is an easy way to help MMS earn rewards.



## ***MMSA Citrus Fundraiser***

Thank you for your participation in the Citrus fundraiser. Delivery is expected in early December.



## ***MMSA Thanks You for Donations!***

A big thank you the families who attended Open House and made contributions to the MMSA during the Membership Drive and/or sent in donations through our Direct Giving program.

We've raised a little over \$1000 so far this year. The funds we raise throughout the year will go towards funding things like our Teacher/Staff Grants, Enrichment programs and activities.

Here is a sampling of some of the items we support monetarily throughout the year with your donations and support through our fundraisers.

- 8th grade end-of-year activities
- 8th grade class night
- 8th grade closing ceremony
- 8th grade picnic
- 6th grade picnic
- EO Smith Scholarship
- Tech Night (with Nancy Gifford)
- History Day
- Field Day
- Friendship Award
- Paper Products for Robotics Club
- Enrichment
- Administration Day
- Staff Appreciation Day
- Grant Requests
- Greenhouse
- Alice and Wonderland Opera (5th grade)
- Sewing supplies for FCS teacher
- Expenses, Jeff Cryan Scholarship Fund



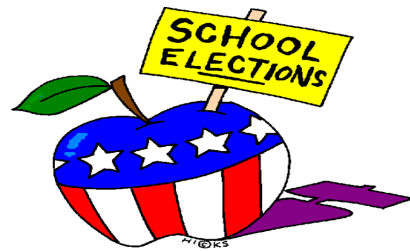
## STUDENT COUNCIL



### ***Falloween Party Nov. 14th!***

Nov 14, 6-8 pm at MMS

Costume Parade, games, food, music  
and lots of fun. Profits to charity.



### ***Student Council Elections!***

Student Council elections will take place on  
Nov 4th so students can take on formal  
leadership roles in their student government.

## ***MMSA Requests your input! Vote Nov. 4th!***



We will be voting on grants funding at our 11/4 meeting at 7pm in Rm 99.



Folks are welcome to come and participate.

Some Example of Last Years Grants:

- “Horizon Wings”, a nonprofit Wildlife Rehabilitation Center, would come to MMS for an hour-long presentation to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. This would help the students understand the life & rehabilitation of birds of prey.
- Four battery powered RC (Radio-controlled) vehicles that will run on different radio frequencies. The goal is to turn this into a competition like the Robotics Club.
- The Science Genie would come to MMS for an hour-long presentation to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Topics may include sound energy, light energy/lasers, & weird science/discrepant events.
- Two hydroponic units for the greenhouse. These units can be reused each year.
- Dr. Gail Herman, a well-known storyteller, would provide enrichment opportunities for all students. She would come for a 4-5 day residency.
- Create a Movement Lab that can be used by all students throughout the day. The lab would combine experimental learning, natural development, & movement through Brain Gym, Rhythmic Movements & Bal-A-Vis-X.
- To host welcoming events & after-school get together for new students. This would provide new students with support & opportunities to connect with other students in a positive way.
- Acting Naturally About Reading – a participatory workshop aimed at improving students’ listening, recall, & observation skills. Pantomime, story dramatization, & improvisation are used.
- Invention Convention – This science/technology event is designed to encourage students to apply basic learning skills in a creative & productive manner.
- A Middle School Financial Aid Awareness Evening will be offered to parents to raise their awareness of the need to plan for post-secondary options for their children.

## MMSA Direct Giving Campaign Donation Form 2014 – 2015

As the Parent or Guardian of a Mansfield Middle School Student, you are considered a member of the Mansfield Middle School Association (MMSA).

As our school's PTO, the MMSA collects voluntary dues so we can provide financial support to our teachers, staff and students for various scholarships, activities, enrichment programs and materials for certain projects. In addition to funding activities like the Closing Ceremony and class picnics, Teachers and Staff request monies from the MMSA each year for their programs and projects through a Grants process. We would like to be able to fully fund all of these requests but we are often only able to support around half of these grants due to shortages in our MMSA school fund. ***This is where you come in*** – in order to better support these requests AND keep the number of fundraisers down throughout the year, we're asking families to give a small donation at the beginning of the year to help support these programs (donations are accepted throughout the school year as well).

**This year the suggested donation is \$10 - \$20;** please consider making whatever contribution fits your budget.

Please complete the bottom section of this form and keep the top portion for your records. Donations can be handed directly to the MMSA delegates on hand at any of the school events, brought to Open House during September, dropped off at the school office, sent in with your child to his/her homeroom or sent in the mail to:

Mansfield Middle School  
attn: MMSA Membership Drive  
205 Spring Hill Road  
Storrs, CT 06268

*Thank you*

A Donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ was made to the MMSA by, Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax ID# 06-1078789

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## MMSA Direct Giving Campaign Donation Form 2014 - 2015

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Gift amount: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your support!*  
*Please make checks payable to: MMSA*